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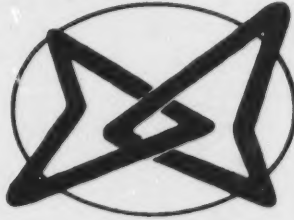
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ABSTRACT

The Documentation and Technical Assistance Project (DTA) was created, in part, to test a premise related to educational problem-solving. It was hypothesized that knowledge gained through on-site documentation of school level problem solving practices could be transformed for utilization (linkage) by other schools and communities to improve the latter's problem solving capacities. In this paper, the documentation (DOC) aspect of this process is examined. The problem of consolidation and transformation of knowledge into usable form is addressed. A case is presented for a device called a Problem-Solving Repertoire (PSR), which in its final form would embody a strategy for consolidating, organizing, and making easily retrievable the DOC-generated knowledge. Problems, both theoretical and circumstantial, that will be met in designing such a PSR are explored. The rationale leading to the proposal of a PSR is presented. The question of content and format is addressed by discussing community accessibility to schools. Several different frameworks for organizing DOC knowledge for a prospective PSR on community accessibility are considered and one of these is recommended. Data are presented from three DOC sites where there is significant parent involvement. Thus, the recommended framework for the PSR approach is illustrated with detailed information from actual cases. (Author/GC)

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TOWARD A PROBLEM-SOLVING REPERTOIRE FOR
COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY TO SCHOOLS

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In Collaboration With the New York Region of the DTA Project

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Glossary of abbreviations used in this paper:

The following abbreviations, commonly used in the DTA project, appear frequently in this paper.

DOC "Documentation"

Field research at NIE-funded sites; one of the primary tasks of DTA.

DCF "Field Data Forms"

Used by site researchers at documentation sites to record observations, incidents, interviews, etc.; they are coded for computer entry.

PSR "Problem Solving Repertoire"

A tool for organizing documentation knowledge for linkage, proposed and explained in this paper.

SR "Site Researcher"

Person who does documentation at the NIE-funded sites.

TA "Technical Assistance"

Technical assistance to improve practice at selected urban public schools; one of the primary tasks of DTA.

TAG "Technical Assistance Group"

Not to be confused with TA, which is a DTA function, a TAG has received funds from NIE to assist in the practices being carried out at the NIE-funded sites.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Documentation and Technical Assistance (DTA) project was created, among other purposes, to test the premise that knowledge gained through on-site documentation (DOC) of school-level problem-solving practices (funded by NIE) could be transformed for utilization ("linkage") in providing technical assistance (TA) to other school-community sites that would improve problem solving capacities at the latter sites. The work of the project, has been divided into three components: Documentation, in which effort is concentrated on establishing a knowledge base of the local problem solving practices; linkage, in which ways are developed to transform the DOC knowledge being gathered into a form that is usable at the TA sites; and technical assistance, in which most project activity concentrates on improving problem solving capacities at the TA sites. The documentation task includes the necessity to be responsive to emergent needs at the TA sites, while the TA team is expected to help define the DOC task, and linkage must be a mutual concern.

This paper examines this process from the vantage point of the DOC team, and addresses the problem of how best to consolidate and transform the knowledge already gained and yet to be gained into a maximally usable form for TA purposes. A case is presented for a device called a Problem-Solving Repertoire (PSR), which in its final form would embody a strategy for consolidating, organizing and making easily

retrievable the DOC-generated knowledge. This paper explores the problems - theoretical and circumstantial - that will have to be faced in designing such a PSR. While it examines several alternative approaches, and proposes one possible model (partially illustrated in an appendix), the paper does not present a fully developed sample PSR. That remains to be done in light of the considerations set down here. PSRs could conceivably be created for a wide range of problem solving areas, for example, organizing a mini school, professional development of teachers, or the administrator's role in school problem solving. In developing the idea of the PSR, this paper focuses on the topic of parent involvement and community accessibility to schools.

Part I sets out in general terms the line of reasoning that has led to the proposal for a PSR. Beginning with a brief background description of past efforts to process documentation knowledge for linkage to TA, this section goes on to examine the nature of that knowledge, both as it emanates from documentation and as it ultimately must be applied at the TA sites themselves. Then after briefly considering two kinds of TA sites and their bearing on linkage, Part I concludes by presenting an elaborated rationale for the PSR, including the linkage problems it is designed to counter, the uses it may be put to, and some of the features it should include, particularly some system of information retrieval. Part II then deals with the question of content and format by turning to the substantive area of community accessibility to schools. Several different frameworks for organizing DOC knowledge

for a prospective PSR on this subject are considered, with one of them, "Outline for Describing Parent Involvement," proposed as perhaps lending itself best to the purposes of a PSR. An appendix uses actual data from three DOC sites where there is significant parent involvement to illustrate both how this outline would function in a PSR and some of the knowledge we have gained so far.

II. THE NEED FOR A PROBLEM-SOLVING REPERTOIRE

Background

The concept of a Problem-Solving Repertoire was originally advanced as a part of the New York DTA Region's linkage plan for Phase II. It was observed at that time that while a good deal of potentially valuable knowledge was being accumulated at the DOC sites, this knowledge had yet to be fully captured, organized and articulated for use in technical assistance. There was need for a clearer picture of what had already been collected, as well as a purposive scheme for making it accessible as needed. It was conceived that the process of consolidating this knowledge would yield a "repertoire" of useful knowledge about local problem-solving capacities, and that by organizing this knowledge around certain themal areas, the DOC team could offer the fruits of their efforts in the form of Problem-Solving Repertoires. PSRs could conceivably be generated, moreover, at the behest of a TA team (provided the desired information was available at the DOC sites).

In past months, several steps have been taken toward the end of consolidating and establishing the necessary knowledge base. Seminars, for example, have been conducted on a series of topics to help articulate and compare practices and experiences at the nine documentation sites. Various persons from the DTA network, including parents, teachers, paraprofessionals and TAG members

from the NIE-funded sites, have been included in these, both to contribute their insights and information and to be kept informed of the knowledge being generated in New York. In addition, TA people in various roles have participated in some of the seminars. In a similar way, their presence has served to lay a groundwork for the necessary coordination of DDC and TA efforts that are becoming increasingly important. Other forms of information and exchange have included making tapes and transcripts of discussions on selected topics, interviews with key actors such as the parent who runs a resource center at one of the sites, other substantive materials such as summaries of site strategies for involving parents, and numerous exchanges by writing and telephone.

In working to consolidate the knowledge gained through documentation and to render it in a form that maximizes its usability for technical assistance, the New York team has had to confront a number of baseline questions, the answers to which will determine the form and, to some extent, the content of the so-called Problem-Solving Repertoires. A discussion of these questions seems necessary, therefore, before we may usefully proceed to formulating the repertoires themselves. Since these questions have arisen in preparation of the PSR for community accessibility to schools, the discussion and examples will be centered in that topic area.

In developing a PSR suitable for technical assistants, we have become aware of the following factors which affect the TA enterprise and, we feel, our job of serving it:

- Quality and nature of the knowledge

- (a) DOC-supplied

- (b) TA-applied

- Character of TA sites

- (a) established

- (b) potential

Quality and Nature of the Knowledge

DOC-Supplied: The quality and nature of the knowledge supplied through documentation of the funded sites depends on variables such as the following:

Individual Site Researcher (SR): background and expertise; skills in observing, recording, interpreting, etc.; personal values and biases governing selectivity, interpretation, judgements, etc.

DOC site conditions: type, setting and success of funded strategy; openness to site researcher; intervening events, changes, crises, etc.; "narrowness" of funded activity (e.g., heavy on staff training, little on community involvement or curricular innovation).

Resulting DOC materials (case studies, FDFs, uncaptured SR knowledge: change over time).

To illustrate these variables in action, let's look at the River City (pseudonym) site. There, the SR's training as an experimental psychologist leads him to adopt a certain style of observing and recording. Within that style he has shown himself to be a perceptive and insightful observer. But be careful of that word "insightful": the principles of the Skinnerian tradition he follows discourage, if not forbid, interpreting events by theoretical inferences from his observations. Still, the nature of his task virtually compels him to form opinions and make judgments of worth, and these are inevitably colored by his personal values and preferences. Meanwhile, the funded site has imposed (as it should) its own forms of observation on the SR. The TAG, funded to operate in two sites, has no presence at one and "no discernible effect" on the other. What is interesting is, at one site, the school's own apparent capacity to encourage and cooperate with an active neighborhood school board. This is therefore what the SR focuses on. When the "community school" spends several months struggling to survive intact, the SR covers that almost exclusively, as he should. As time goes by, the SR's knowledge of the site accumulates and evolves. He begins, let's say, by being impressed by the degree and quality of community involvement, then, probing further, begins to question and criticize; finally he concludes that he needs better knowledge of the broader context of the site before he can responsibly advance further judgments. The character of the "knowledge" generated for that site, then, would depend on which of these stages in the SR's critical evolution is operative at the time the knowledge is reported.

At other DOC sites, meanwhile, SRs differ widely as to field of experience, level of training and skills, personal values and work style, and so on, all greatly shaping the nature and quality of the resulting DOC data. Their DOC sites are similarly varied, perhaps even more so with their sharply differing settings, structures, goals, personalities, degrees of success, etc., determining both what they show and what the SR must observe. Add to these factors the grounded approach of the documentation (which tends to enhance the salience of the individual site and SR factors) and the uneven rate of success to be found among the funded sites (which makes the transformation of knowledge of "effective problem-solving capacities" rather problematic) and you have some rather significant problems when it comes to consolidating and transforming this knowledge for use at completely different sites by completely different people.

TA-Applied: Possessed as we now are of masses of documentation data in largely unprocessed form for the purposes of application to specific TA sites or issues, we are now dealing with the task of transforming and transmitting what we "know". Among the questions we face in connection with this task are:

- (a) To whom (i.e., practitioners, field technical assistants, conceptualizers for TA, etc.), and at what level, do we pitch our information?

- (b) What other forms of knowledge-reporting ought we be concerned with?

In order to answer any of these questions, we need information or guidance from TA people. It is difficult to generate "useful" information without knowledge of its projected use. Such knowledge would include knowing who the recipients are, what their settings are like and how they see their needs. Steps have already been taken to exchange this knowledge both through informal direct communications and through the program of seminars which brings together people from the different DTA sub-units. Perhaps in part because the TA teams had already contracted with TA sites to work on specific problem-solving capacities, however, the relevance of selected DOC sites have not always been clear to TA team members. Indeed, specific doubts have been voiced by TA people as to how useful the DOC information is to them generally, and the question has even arisen to the extent of TA's obligation to employ it. A kind of stand-off results, with DOC people possessed to useful knowledge but in need of guidance as to application in order to do their part in "transformation"; and TA people already well along in their own on-site activities and feeling no pressing need for accounts of other people's experiences in rather dissimilar settings with rather dissimilar problems to work on.

One of the things that determines how useful a TA agent or recipient will find DOC-produced knowledge is the form in which it is provided. In the process of recording, transmitting and receiving, however, there is an inevitable "transformation". Documentation in this project has been explicitly attentive to qualitative data, the detailed observation of people and events within specific contexts. The recording of such observations entails a certain amount of interpretation, while preparing the resulting information for transmittal to the TA team involves a further transformation in such forms as summing up, highlighting significant points, drawing inferences, and so forth. The information thus received is then further processed for ultimate use with practitioners at TA sites. In moving from place to place, person to person, purpose to purpose, the original knowledge is inevitably transformed, successively filtered, most probably simplified. Most important in terms of DTA's experimental purpose is the likelihood that the person at the end of the TA line (practitioners or TA agent) is getting a knowledge product many times removed from the richness of its original setting.

To be true to the qualitative nature of the knowledge captured in raw form (and promptly interpreted) by the site researcher, the transmitter of DOC knowledge must generalize reluctantly, simplify warily. But the TA recipient understandably is resistant to wading through piles of descriptive data; efficiency requires a product that is reasonably ready for application, with the most useful points selected or underscored and the irrelevant portions left behind. How to reconcile these conflicting needs?

One way is to find ways to communicate the knowledge needs of TA sites to the DOC team with great clarity and efficiency. Another, perhaps allied, way is to minimize the number and complexity of the channels or stages through which DOC information must pass, finding short-cuts between DOC sites and TA sites. The shortest cut of all would be for practitioners at TA sites themselves to observe directly the practices at DOC sites or, alternatively, for DOC site participants to visit TA sites to share first-hand experiences. Indeed, this latter method has been tried at least once, when a parent activist for Los Diablos City (pseudonym) DOC site traveled to Chicago to speak to parents and teachers of the TA site there. The next best approach is for on-site DOC personnel to visit other sites: SRs to TA sites, TAs to DOC sites. These have both also been used to good effect.

Methods of direct contact such as these will tend to minimize the amount of unwanted "transforming" of DOC knowledge that seems inevitable in a system that relies on continual processing and interpretation as written knowledge gets passed around from one branch of DTA to another.

Character of TA sites

Established: Oakland and Chicago are both TA sites that were selected and established before the form and content of the DOC knowledge had been ascertained; nor were these sites specifically chosen because of their high potential for affinity with the funded sites, i.e. for specific applicability of the knowledge of the problem-solving capacities that eventually would emerge

from them. In other words, there is no ready-made match between the needs of the TA sites and the knowledge available at the funded (DOC) sites. Finding points of congruence between TA needs and DOC capacities, in fact, has been a major task facing DTA-Phase II.

Our search for these points of congruence is affected by a number of possible factors:

- (1) Contextual differences between TA and DOC sites. Except on rather gross levels, the sites do not have very much in common. DTA's grounded, ethnographic approach to documentation is in fact intended to give salience to unique combinations of contextual factors--community, school history and structure, goals, etc., etc.--and their interaction, rather than prestructured research variables. In the area of community involvement, these differences among sites are even more pronounced.
- (2) Possible discrepancies between TA sites' approach to community accessibility (e.g., their reasons for involving parents, the roles and structures they are willing to consider, etc.) and those of the DOC sites. If a TA site defines its needs for community involvement in terms that do not relate to anything in the experience of the funded sites, on what does the research team base its knowledge contribution? Or does it bow out? Or does it speculate based on knowledge acquired elsewhere?

Potential Sites: The concept of potential TA sites fits more readily with the Problem-Solving Repertoire in that such sites could be chosen to accord with what knowledge the DOC team has to offer. This would greatly diminish the problems noted above of differences in context and approaches to problem-solving. Not that such discrepancies would disappear, for to some degree they are inevitable. But assuming that the discrepancies will not be prohibitively wide before a TA commitment is made is at least a possibility.

The chief advantage in new TA sites from the researchers' point of view stems from the possibility that they may be chosen carefully as "markets" for DOC knowledge, that is, on the basis of an ascertained need at the site for the kind of knowledge generated at the DOC sites. In such a circumstance, the DOC team would not have to wonder how to select and report its knowledge, or whether the knowledge might even be useable or useful.

Rationale for a Problem-Solving Repertoire

The rationale for Problem-Solving Repertoire grown inductively from consideration of our situation vis à vis documentation knowledge. It is a premise of DTA that knowledge gained through documenting successful ways to improve problem-solving capacities

could be utilized at other sites by technical assisters with access to the knowledge. One way to approach this would be (a) to ascertain the content of the knowledge that is to be utilized, then (b) to find practitioners elsewhere who might be helped by it. The first step is necessary in order to tell what kind of TA the project will be equipped to offer; if you are documenting the organization and management of an alternative mini-school within an urban public high school, to take a gross example, you will likely have more to provide in the way of assistance to another urban public high school interested in setting up a mini-school than you would if your client were an elementary school trying to increase the role of parents in the life and governance of the school. You might well, of course, be able to assist an elementary school that wants to start a mini-school, or a public high school trying to reorganize for greater community accessibility. But clearly the closer the TA site is to the DOC site in community setting, type of school, resources, needs and change goals the greater the likelihood of applicability of DOC knowledge to TA needs.

A first step in making the most suitable match along these lines would be to develop a profile of the DOC knowledge being gathered. The purpose of this profile, apart from the reflective insight

it gives to researchers on the documentation process itself, is to give potential users of the knowledge a picture of what the project has to offer. This will help them tell, from their side, whether they would like to participate as recipients of TA based on that knowledge. The nature and content of the knowledge is what both sides base their actions on.

In his paper (1976) on the Pilot Site Dissemination Project, Sam Sieber describes a successful project which attempted to link practitioners with research resources through the use of general "extension agents." The function of these agents was to assist local practitioners in defining their needs, then to act as resource people with access to the national research pool. Next, having sought out research pertinent to the locally-defined needs, the agent would lay out options for action by practitioners, and assist them in using the knowledge in the way they choose.

In DTA we are not generalists like Sieber's extension agents. Theoretically the knowledge pool we draw from is primarily, though not necessarily exclusively, the funded DOC sites. The central DTA experiment, in fact, is to find ways to study and record problem-solving practices to render them useful to other practitioners. The nine funded sites, however, are idiosyncratic in context, diverse in their goals, uneven in their effectiveness. The knowledge we gain directly through documentation is necessarily quite specialized, site-specific (difficult to generalize) and, therefore, limited. We are not, based on the DOC-derived knowledge

available to us, in a position to give general technical assistance. Nor would we be justified in claiming to have produced generalized knowledge from our rather narrow experience. We cannot say, for example, that because there was downtown support for parent involvement at both sites where parent involvement was successfully achieved (Washington Community School (6) (pseudonym) initially, and Responsive Education Program (8) (pseudonym)), downtown support is a sine qua non for parent involvement to work elsewhere. The most that can be said is something on the order of "it works this way for some".

This is by no means to say, however, that the DOC team has not produced some (potentially) very valuable knowledge. Site researchers have put in long hours observing and recording events and activities of undoubted significance, the knowledge of which could be of great usefulness to others. No one, however, has use for all of it; many people have use for none of it. But some people not only could use it, they have great need of it. The question is how to find those people who could benefit substantially from it.

A problem to be faced in answering this question, however, is the same one we face in seeking the best way to report knowledge to the TA team: how, how much and in what form do we transmit DOC knowledge? Take just the subject of parent involvement. Report it all? That would be both pointless and inefficient, involving

whole chapters of case studies, portions of others, SR papers and countless bits from FDFs. To select salient points, to sum up, to draw conclusions may be done up to a point, but not without losing the contextual variables deemed so important to DTA's documentation. Besides, we have already discussed the danger of generalizing out of context from experience at only one or two sites.

It is these considerations and this line of reasoning that have led to the notion of a Problem-Solving Repertoire (PSR). Such a repertoire would serve not as a compendium of everything learned through DOC on a given subject (for reasons just given) but rather as a means of indicating to interested parties the nature and the scope of the knowledge gathered at the sites and therefore available on an as-needed basis. Potential TA recipients could use the PSR to determine whether there is a match with their needs. TA agents within DTA could use it to identify areas of knowledge for which they have a use. Once this has been done a specific request could be made to be furnished with more information on the subject identified. Knowing, through the request, the conditions of the need would enable researchers to report the information in a form appropriate to its anticipated need. The whole process would take place with a maximum of communication between both parties to ensure mutual understanding.

As a corollary to the PSR there is a need of a system for the retrieval of needed information to make it accessible to both DOC and TA people. DOC knowledge at present has been produced in quite a range of forms: from the case studies with their rather

broad descriptive sweep that couches information in its site context; to the FDFs, which atomize information into bits removed from their context. In addition, the SRs are writing papers on selected topics of interest across sites; some information exists in raw form--in tapes or transcripts of seminar discussions, for instance, or in unprocessed interview transcripts or SRs' field notes. Another source of knowledge with great potential importance is various kinds of fugitive--i.e. as yet uncaptured--information. This exists mainly in SRs' heads: in recollections, interpretations, opinions, syntheses that are not yet recorded but could be provided on demand, or in response to a newly-perceived need for it. Another source for fugitive knowledge is other people at the funded sites whose first hand experience could be a potent resource for TA people or practitioners at TA sites. We caught a glimpse of the potential in such direct exchanges during the experimental seminar on community accessibility, when a member of the Chicago TA team learned from a New York based site researcher that a teacher at the DOC site had set up a program with much in common with one the TA site was interested in starting. Since that teacher seemed to have strengths as a trainer and articulator to others, she appeared to hold promise as a direct aid to the TA team and site personnel.

Individuals possessing qualities that make them effective communicators to other groups should not be overlooked as valuable linkage agents. Practitioners at TA sites may well respond better to their

peers from DOC sites who share their understandings, speak their language, and thus have more credibility. It is not even necessary for these individuals to have the same intellectual grasp of the significance of what they have done that would be expected of researchers. Practitioners are often much more receptive to a lively recounting of first hand, practical experience than they are to a well-organized, well-digested presentation of "knowledge" by experts. For this reason, identifying individuals with appropriate experience and a gift for communicating it may be as worthwhile an objective, for DOC and TA purposes, as identifying specific areas and topics of knowledge.

A system for the retrieval of DOC knowledge should incorporate these considerations. The pages that follow explore some frameworks and categories that might be used both for the Problem-Solving Repertoire and a retrieval system to be used in conjunction with it. Using the general topic area of parent involvement and community accessibility to schools, component subjects are suggested that can serve as an index to tell (a) what kind of knowledge has been collected and can be made available (the PSR), and (b) where to look for further, more detailed and specific, information on the same subject (retrieval system). To answer the latter question, a system of footnotes or other notations would have to be devised that would lead the searcher to the appropriate repositories of information.

As an example, take the section below (see Appendix) on "structures, strategies and roles for parent involvement". Under the heading for the Responsive Education Program (8) within this section would be listed all the devices employed there specifically to involve parents: parent rooms, Saturday parent-child workshops, bilingual parent facilitators, Responsive Education Support Committee, Responsive Education Advisory Service-parent meetings, consciousness raising sessions, Responsive Education Documentation Project, etc. Brief descriptions of each of these would be followed by notations telling where further information is obtainable. Thus, someone wanting to know more about the parent room would be directed, say, to pages 124-126 of case study, FDFs under xyz, reprint of interview with Project Director, etc. There might also be a list of individuals to contact as resource persons on a given subject--the site researcher, a parent coordinator, a TAG member--with descriptions made available of the specific strengths of each individual, e.g., "would be good with group of teachers as advocate of parent involvement", or "very knowledgeable on in-school politics, but not effective speaking to a group".

III. MODELS FOR A PSR ON COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY

The biggest problem in searching for ways to report DOC knowledge related to parent involvement and community accessibility to schools is in how to organize the data either for reporting or for retrieval. In trying to work through this problem I have found several frameworks to be helpful. Each represents a different way of "cutting" the data, a different means of examining

both the question of parent involvement and the material that has been gathered on it. All yield different kinds of knowledge. They should be seen more as illustrative and indicative than as exhaustive or definitive.

Program Models and Assumptions

The first of these frameworks focuses on the assumptions underlying the "program" in question, that is, the TAG strategy both generally in terms of education and specifically with regard to parent involvement. In a paper by Daniel Safran (1974), Director for the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, four alternative program models were presented (Figure 1), each one based on a different assumption about what the program must overcome, i.e. (1) "deficit" in children (e.g., "culture of poverty" theories); (2) "school-as-failure"; (3) cultural discontinuity; (4) structure of society. Each of these has definite implications both for how the children's educational program should be planned and for the form of parent involvement that is sought. When different actor-groups hold different assumptions along these lines, conflicts are bound to occur. In DTA such groups may include parents, school administrators, teachers, TAG members and TA agents; since these are seldom monolithic, moreover, there may be subgroups holding different views within each. As a highly plausible illustration, let us say that a TAG group bases its program strategy on a cultural discontinuity model; the predominant parent group sees the issue as one of community powerlessness and adopts a political (or, roughly, a "social-structural") model; most

FIGURE 1

Model	Assumption	Program Implications	
		Child	Parent
"Deficit"	The low income child has had fewer meaningful experiences than the middle class child and is thus disadvantaged in his readiness for public school.	Remediation in order to catch up with other children.	Parent education to fill in gaps in what parents know about the world.
"School-as-Failure"	The school is unable to draw upon or deal with the child's own resources.	Teachers need to be retrained for greater sensitivity to and knowledge of the child's resources and needs; school-community relations to be improved.	Involvement so as to produce school reform; engage in problem solving and decision making experiences.
"Cultural Difference"	Although not deficient, the child differs from the middle class child and the middle class values of the public school.	Develop and implement a curriculum based upon cultural pluralism.	Involve parents as representatives of child's culture and as community resources.
"Social Structural"	Parents behave in accordance with societal demands and expectations, and the way in which they've been treated; you cannot change the individual without changing the social structure in which he lives.	No immediate program implications; child is the ultimate beneficiary of social changes.	Involve parents in and train them for social action to identify and overcome oppressive social conditions.

teachers, meanwhile, are convinced that the problem of school failure can be traced to the home--"cultural deprivation", economic disadvantage, etc.: the deficit model. Something very like this breakdown appears to be present at Los Diablos site. Although the TAG's funded strategy is based on a "cultural discontinuity" model, and parent involvement is presumably designed to support that strategy's rationale, the LD site researcher has commented:

The parents for their part, have no discussion of cultural discontinuity. I have not heard a single parent or even parent consultant discuss any concept relating to cultural discontinuity as the reason why the children do not learn...However, every single meeting I have been in bar none, parents have said the issue is one of power.

Principals and teachers, meanwhile, tend to defend the school against both positions, (both of them being "school-deficit" models), either implicitly leaning on client-deficit assumptions or, publicly, denying any undue problem at all.

For all its tendency to oversimplify if applied too literally, this framework, in calling attention to the possibility and the substance of these contrasting outlooks, may increase the ability to understand, if not necessarily solve, resulting conflicts.

For TAGs or TA people or anyone attempting to facilitate or intervene an awareness of these dynamics seems essential.

It might be worthwhile to include here a framework developed by Steve Wilson (1976) to break down different "approaches to what constitutes (problem-solving) capacities". As such, these are more focused on intervention strategies themselves, and thus have more relevance, perhaps, to TAGs. Their usefulness for the present discussion stems from the fact that, in Wilson's words: "Each has significant power to some groups as a principle for organizing analysis of what is wrong with urban schools and for identifying what would be a capacity for improvement." The following approaches, adapted from Wilson's list, are variously seen as the "keys" to improvement:

- I. Political decentralization, accountability to clients
- II. Cultural (dis-) continuity
- III. "Organizational Development"
- IV. Efficient Management
- V. Strong Leader (or leadership group)
- VI. Teaching training
- VII. Educational theory

Types and Levels of Parent Involvement

Possible participatory roles for parents being so many and varied, some framework is prerequisite to describing or understanding them. Several typologies of parent involvement have broken it down by level: from simplest to most sophisticated in terms of skills required, from most passive to most active in terms of time and commitment, from least power wielded to most.

One common simple breakdown of possible parent roles that is more

horizontal than by levels is:

- I. Educational: recipient of parent education; educator of one's child
- II. Employment: paid or volunteer work
- III. Decision maker or policy advisor

It is perhaps the hidden implications and effects of each of these role types that need to be stressed here. Educational-type involvement, for example, may be seen as a "blame the victim" tactic, since it rests on an implicit assumption of either parent or child deficit, or both; and since it diverts attention from the school's responsibility to educate its children. An unintended (sometimes!) side-effect of employing parents either as paid workers or as volunteers is often to give such parents a material or status interest in the school as it is currently structured; people naturally tend to identify with the organization that pays them. A similar kind of cooptation may result from giving parents positions as advisors or decision makers. Once they become "insiders", they may come to sympathize with the viewpoint of their "co-insiders". Principals often seem particularly adept at turning purported parent watchdogs into allies, paradoxically, in some cases, by including them as close advisors with access to all the principal's records--and his or her reasoning as well. Similarly, parents who feel alienated from the school and stay uninvolved may see involved parents as agents of the school and no longer one of them. (This happened at one of the New York sites, East Town High School (9) (pseudonym): when newly-involved parents went out to drum up participation in the community, they were met as school people,

not peers.)

A different approach to a typology of parent involvement is by levels, a hierarchy or ladder of participation, as follows:

Levels of Parent Participation

1. passive participation: receiver of information
 - a. on child
 - b. on school
2. social participation: attending open house at school, PTA meetings, bingo games, chili suppers, craft programs.
3. volunteer service
 - a. fund raising (staffing and organizing).
 - b. in-school non-educational (lunchroom, corridor, clerical)
 - c. in-school educational (tutor, etc.
4. recipients of training or education
 - a. program-related
 - b. program-unrelated
5. enlistment as political allies (usually issue-related); includes use of parents' contacts with elites, community organizations.
6. paid employment
 - a. classroom (tutors, aides)
 - b. non-classroom (e.g., community worker)
7. decision making - influence: advisory committees

8. policy making - power: governing board; policy committees.

The utility of this hierarchical framework, apart from its ability to indicate and illustrate the vertical range of possible forms of parent involvement, has already emerged from the case studies. In the two funded sites that have effective parent involvement, Washington Community School (6) and the Responsive Education Program (8), both are characterized by a multiplicity of entry points. Both Robert Brown (an SR from whose typology of involvement levels the one above is adapted) and Chitra Karunakaran (an SR) have stressed the ability to participate at a comfortable level, in keeping with an individual parent's current skills, as critical. At Washington (6) the following was reported by Brown (1976) as a "critical activity":

Slots available for participation at all levels and at different degrees of intensity. This availability allows entry participation at a level comfortable to parents and compatible with present skills. It also provides on-the-job training (and observational learning) for participation at other levels.

Likewise, the Responsive Education (8) case study (Karunakaran, 1977) notes the importance of "self-determination" of the form of a parent's participation will take, and of the "flexibility with which parent facilitator roles have been envisaged" in "developing

school-related capacities of parents." On the side of negative experience, the East Town H.S. (9) case study describes unreasonable participation expectations placed on parents, who were unprepared to participate in meetings, articulate educational preferences or beliefs, relate to decision making and employ other such skills called for by the pre-existing "collaborative structure". Had participation options more compatible with their skills been made available, or had training been provided in participation skills, parent involvement might have been more successful (though there were other problems at East Town (9)).

Outline for Describing Parent Involvement

The next framework is constructed as an aid to organizing the knowledge of parent involvement gained through documentation although it may also be useful to organize knowledge on a variety of other topics of relevance to technical assistants. It also serves to call attention to key topic areas in a way that should facilitate both understanding and retrieval. The headings are not meant to be rigid; to the extent they impede qualitative description in any way, they should be dispensed with. They overlap each other, and filling in information on a site under all headings will mean some repetition, though different emphases. In particular, the last category, "Critical factors et al.", will tend to recapitulate substantial portions of the preceding data.

The framework, in outline form, is as follows:

Outline for Describing Parent Involvement

1. Introduction/Overview
2. Context/Historical Background
 - a. school district
 - b. school level
 - c. parent community
3. Philosophy/Values: content; level of commitment to them; application
 - a. educational program
 - b. parent participation
4. Leadership: quality (e.g., focused, fragmented; strong, weak); role
5. Support: nature of support; source (e.g., downtown, teachers, parents)
6. Teachers, staff: nature of role
7. Parent Participation: strategies; structures; roles
8. Critical Factors, Events, Activities, Problems
 - a. district level
 - b. school level
 - c. parent-community level

This framework seems the most promising as a way of structuring knowledge on parent involvement for linkage purposes. First, it provides guidance to a person engaged in documentation as to the categories of information that are needed for a complete picture

picture of parent involvement, both for individual school-communities and across sites. Second, to a person doing technical assistance, it indicates not only what information on the subject is available and how it is organized, but also what are the salient features of any effort to improve community accessibility to schools. In short, the framework serves a linkage function, putting documentation knowledge into a format that emphasizes both content and conceptual aptness, and that lends itself to both comprehension and retrieval. An additional function the framework might serve is diagnosis or analysis of a new site, whether a DOC site or a TA site. A TA person, for example, by filling in the outline for a given school community, would have the basis either for a needs assessment or for a strategy for improvement.

In order to illustrate the meaning of the items in this outline, as well as to present some of the actual knowledge that is being collected by documentation concerning community accessibility to school, an appendix has been added showing the outline in actual use.

A Final Word on Community Accessibility to Schools

In a written commentary prompted by one of the New York Seminars on TA linkage, Jay Schensul (1977) noted that: sustained parent involvement of a critical and independent as well as supportive nature, is very difficult to achieve, except in unusual cases. This is because of lots of things including:

1. The nature of schools as institutions with their own cultures and social structures usually prohibits meaningful outside involvement.
2. Parents have "learned" that their roles in schools are peripheral.
3. Active parents get "co-opted" through being offered paid positions.
4. There are no community organizations to support and provide backup to a small group of active parents, and they can't do it alone.
5. The school limits and confines the roles of community and parents in the school, and thereby controls them.
6. There are no adequate sources of training and experience for parents who would wish to participate.
7. Parents are busy with other issues and have no time to volunteer or become activists in the school setting.
8. Parent-turnover - parents leave the school when children leave.

While these are indeed among the chief barriers to parent involvement, with ample evidence to be found at many of the nine funded sites, they are neither inevitable nor insurmountable. Many of them have been successfully breached at the sites through a variety of means and circumstances. In listing some of those we have observed, we can only reemphasize the extent to which their success depends on contextual factors at a given school--quality of leadership, strength of administrative support, clarity of philosophy and goals, and so forth.

Support for Parent Involvement

1. An atmosphere may be created at a school in which parents feel not only welcome but as if they belong there. The "Open Door" school, where parents are not made to explain their visit, are not issued passes, need not register, is a start. A Parent Room gives them a space that is their own. A few amenities - a coffee pot, a phone line, a work table--add to its legitimacy. At Responsive Education (8) schools, the phenomenon of "hanging out" at school by parents, who meet teachers, familiarize themselves with classrooms and the office, helps bring parents a sense of belonging.
2. Parents may contribute to the learning program, forming an "educational support structure", assisting in classrooms, working with individual children, accompanying groups on field trips, etc. Parents must be shown their contribution is important, and they are needed.
3. Parents may contribute to maintenance of the school program through participation on governing and policy committees, helping to make decisions on curriculum, hiring, purchasing, etc.
4. Parents may function as political resources, providing links with powerful organizations and individuals in the community. Through deliberate consciousness-raising strategies parents can

become informed advocates on issues critical to their children's learning.

(N.B. This recommendation, like #2, #3 and others, is contingent on the presence of a school program that is worth supporting and defending. The danger of cooptation is permanent; when the program is worthy, it is perhaps not altogether a bad thing.)

5. The importance of early parent collaboration in planning and developing their own involvement has been demonstrated repeatedly, as have the dire consequences of omitting it.
6. Training for parent involvement may be necessary. This need not reflect an assumption of parent deficiency, or of a service being provided to parents. Parents may be viewed as valuable resources, whose skilled collaboration is needed by the school. Teachers too, not incidentally, need training for parent involvement. (A Florida study showed that when parents alone were trained for involvement, the result was increased demands and sometimes hostile confrontations; when only teachers were trained for parent involvement, the result was increased involvement by parents; the most positive results came from training of both groups.)
7. Opportunities for participation can be offered in different forms and at different levels, so that individual parents can begin

to contribute immediately according to where they feel competent and comfortable.

8. While many parents doubtless are "too busy" to become active at school, many more would come if they felt welcome and if they had something to do there. In addition, there are ways to ease the apparent burdens of involvement. One school provides a babysitting service--a room with toys and a parent supervising--at the school for visiting parents.
9. Outside community support for parent involvement can be cultivated and won by seeking out community organizations, exchanging goal statements and proposing reciprocal support.

APPENDIX

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT THREE SITES: THE FRAMEWORK ILLUSTRATED

Outline for Describing Parent Involvement

1. Introduction/Overview
2. Context/Historical Background
 - a. school district
 - b. school level
 - c. parent community
3. Philosophy/Values: content; level of commitment to them/
application
 - a. educational program
 - b. parent participation
4. Leadership: quality (e.g. focused, fragmented; strong, weak);
role
5. Support: nature of support; source (e.g. downtown, teachers,
parents)
6. Teachers, staff: nature of role
7. Parent Participation: strategies; structures; roles
8. Critical Factors, Events, Activities, Problems
 - a. district level
 - b. school level
 - c. parent-community level

Two ways of employing this framework for the present discussion are possible. One would be to take each site on which we have significant data on parent involvement and do a series of profiles of each in turn by filling in the outline. This approach would focus on the sites, illustrating the interrelationships among components that are the essence of a case study. The second approach, which we choose to follow, is to consider each topic area in turn, and illustrate it using data from documentation. This emphasis allows us to explicate the framework itself, as well as to isolate out of context some of the site data, comparing them across sites. In following this approach here, data will be supplied from the three sites for which the case studies give substantial information on parent involvement: Washington (6) (River City), Responsive Education Program (8) (New York) and East Town High School (9) (New York). This knowledge does not attempt to be comprehensive. Rather, it focuses, for purposes of illustration, on key factors under each heading for the sites.

1. Introduction/overview

This heading is self-explanatory. It provides, for a given site, whatever orientation is necessary for understanding the information that follows.

2. Context/historical background

- a. school district

Washington (6): When Washington (6) Neighborhood School Board got its start, there was strong district support from the superintendent's office, which appointed Washington's (6) principal, Ned Winter (6). The NSB's roots took hold in a sympathetic climate. Later, when River City merged with suburban Jackson County (6) to form a single school district, support for NSB evaporated. But the roots were strong.

Responsive Education Program (8): District D, formed under a law decentralizing the administration of NYC schools, is a politically savvy area of the city. The community was determined to make the most of its new opportunities for a policy voice, and district officials, including elected board members, tended to reflect these sentiments. They were quite open to active parent involvement.

East Town (9): The NYC Central Board (high schools were not included in decentralization) went along with the original plans for East Town (9), but it has never been supportive of meaningful decision making participation by parents of the kind envisioned by East Town's (9) collaborative structure. Furthermore, what support there was initially from downtown became soft, first with personnel changes in the Superintendent's office, and again as the Board retrenched in response to budget cutbacks.

b. School level

Washington (6): Since the advent of the Winter regime at Washington (which preceded both TAG and DOC), the school has been building a strong identity, shared by what is apparently a critical mass of school-community members, as a "Community School". Winter, who came from the central office (he'd been an assistant Superintendent), attracted a group of energetic young teachers dedicated to implementing his ideas of active parent involvement. (Some teachers even give up part of their salary to help pay parents to participate!) Enough parents have been brought on board to form a school-level functioning unit--the unity later cemented, no doubt, by the school's fight to survive intact with its NSB.

Responsive Education Program (8): Because of its neighborhood, the schools (P.S. XY and AB) have long been accustomed to concerned parents seeking various kinds of involvement. New opportunities for involvement represented by Responsive Education (8) were taken in stride if not welcomed.

East Town (9): This was a school being created from scratch. There was a commitment among the founding group to the idea of parent involvement, and a structured plan for achieving it; but there was no shared history of involvement in the school (since it was new), no pre-existing identity as a school or of the school's "community", no prior experience operating the parent involvement-based "collaborative structure": this was an experiment, after all. It is difficult enough for any high school

to foster parent involvement under the best conditions: sending areas are widespread and parents may live far away; parents tend to think of their high school-age children as getting old enough to begin to take care of themselves--and the kids themselves may agree, being at an age where they're seeking independence from parents. (Student participation in decision making may be a more pertinent issue than parent involvement for that reason); and the departmental structure of high schools tends to fragment them into pressure groups unamenable to unified policy control (even if East Town (9) was not formally structured that way, the tendency persists).

c. parent community

Washington (6): The Fishtown community, River City's "poor white" section, is relatively stable, having a number of established community groups in it. Parents here have time for involvement in school affairs because they are poor, many of them unemployed and/or on welfare.

Responsive Education Program (8): The program began at this site with a core of sophisticated, mainly white, middle class activist parents eager to promote opportunities to be involved in school affairs. As Washington (6) parents have free time because they are poor, District D parents have had free time because they are middle class, not forced to work. As the program grew, the active parent group has expanded to include lower income white, Black and Hispanic parents, some of them unemployed and on welfare.

East Town (9): The parent community has changed drastically, from the sophisticated, middle class politically active Black, Hispanic and white parents who took part in the design and early pilot stages of the school and who were committed and informed in sufficient numbers to make the committee structure work, to the current population of poor, predominantly Black and Hispanic, non-political parents with little understanding of the collaborative structure and few of the skills necessary to participate in it in any case.

3. Philosophy/Values

Washington (6): Both educational and political values here are well-defined and important factors at the school. The educational philosophy strongly emphasizes "humanistic education", i.e., meeting children's human needs as a precondition for attention to achievement. Politically, there is a strong commitment to governance by the school community--"The Washington (9) Community School"--which necessitates an active, formal role for parents. These twin philosophies infuse the life of the school, giving it coherence and a sense of direction and purpose. It is not necessary that everyone be able to verbalize or even conceptualize these philosophies in any depth; people's sense of their presence is enough. But as spelled out by the TAG, according to this site's case study (Brown, 1976, p. 122), the assumption is made,

that broadly based collaborative decision making would result in more people being committed to the success of a school and its programs and that this, in turn, would result in improved education for students.

Derived from the social-psychological notion of "ownership", this assumption is also rooted in the basic democratic notion that parents, as consumers of education, "have a right and obligation to know that product they are receiving and also to influence its nature and delivery" (Brown, 1976).

Responsive Education Program (8): The program imported with it an already well-developed, coherent philosophy of open education that can satisfy well-educated parents and that includes as a necessary component the active involvement of parents (a) as educational resources with a necessary, central role to play in their children's education and therefore a need to be trained, and (b) as political spokespersons for the program and for open education. Parents are developed as both educational and political resources and given a clear stake in the program's fate. Also, in perhaps a more subtly powerful sense, parents serve a viable presence in the schools. Parents simply are here, which has a strong effect on the climate of a school.

East Town (9): There was at the outset a shared belief in the abstract value of collaborative decision making, and this idea was embodied in the governance and committee structure. This structure, however, was cumbersome and difficult to understand. A clearly conceived goal was lacking, resulting in a lack of direction; reliance was placed in the structure itself. The faith in procedures to produce desirable results, as well

as the complex structure, both reflected middle class values and thinking. When the parent population changed and was unable to participate in the structure, the response of the administration was to hold rigidly to the structure (the embodiment of the democratic values) and find fault with the parents. Such unwillingness to adapt the structure to the needs, skills, values of the clients is, ironically, the antithesis of democracy, ostensibly the program's organizing principle.

4. Leadership

Washington (6): The school is dominated by a gifted leader with a vision, and strong ideas about how to achieve it. Principal Ned Winter, formerly a professor of counseling at a Southern State University, where he reportedly ran encounter groups; then hired as an OD consultant in the late 1960's by the new school superintendent for teacher training; finally, perhaps in order to test his skills and his values as principal of his own school, he moved to Washington starting in the early 1970's. Though unorthodox in style, Winter was able to sell his vision to enough people to win their allegiance. He is a highly skilled politico. When parents tested his commitment to giving them power by insisting that the school be closed for a day for a party against the wishes of both Winter and downtown officials, Winter backed the parents. He has established his credibility to such an extent that parent policy makers may be virtually a rubber stamp for what he wants. The structures that have been set up for parent involvement, and the values they reflect and promote, are of great

interest in themselves. But there seems little question that it is Winter's strong leadership presence that makes it all go.

Responsive Education Program (8): Another gifted leader with a vision, Marian Barber came to the district as a proven pioneer in the practice of open education, thus bringing her own prestige and clout with her. She is a high-powered, charismatic individual who wins people's respect and loyalty by respecting them, giving them important roles to play. She uses political tactics to pursue educational goals, a very right combination for her clientele in this district.

While Marian Barber provides strong central direction and a critical "center of gravity", another part of her leadership style is to encourage a kind of "regional autonomy", in which lower-echelon leaders may exercise considerable authority. Thanks to this practice, the NIE-funded Responsive Education Advisors, who have school-level (and workshop) responsibility, have each been able to put their personal stamps on the programs they supervise. As a result, the operating programs have become much less dependent on the central leader, indispensable as her role was at the beginning.

The school principals also play an important leadership support role. Both are firm believers in maximizing parent involvement in all aspects of the school, and have been responsible for setting a tone and a course that supports it. (An interview with

the principal of P.S. AB is available in which we describes his approach and some methods for encouraging parent involvement.)

East Town (9): Leadership was shifting, fragmented and unstable.

During the semester-long pilot phase, a good deal of initiative was expected from the faculty, who responded by creating such structures as the Committee system by which parents and teachers would decide school policies jointly. Three directors with divided responsibilities--education leader (principal), community liaison and financial/fund-raising manager--were more or less supportive of this democratic style of operation. When the school opened officially (post-pilot), however, a new education director took over and a clash followed. The new director was more directive and authoritarian, and moved to centralize power in her office. This antagonized many of the young, more radical, white teachers who had become accustomed to operating "democratically", and seven of the ten teachers left, along with one of the directors who was "their" leader. Thereafter, the character and the climate of the school "changed dramatically", according to the site researcher, and support for extensive parent involvement faded sharply. The three-way directorship that continued was riven by personality clashes. The one original director remaining was later killed in an auto accident. Later, when the strongly directive--some say "dictatorial"--principal left, leadership was taken over by the third director, who has had trouble winning the confidence and allegiance of the different management and constituent groups.

5. Support

Washington (6): As a politically shrewd leader, Ned Winter has been very adept at winning support from a wide range of sources. He began his stint at Washington with the strong backing of Harold Baldwin, the superintendent. (Not incidentally, Baldwin's wife worked as a volunteer tutor at the school.) He set up a Neighborhood School Board that owed its power to him and supported him down the line (especially after he passed the test mentioned above). Teachers supported him (or rather, supported the school's educational policies and its parent involvement, but that is the same as supporting Ned Winter) because (a) he attracted a cadre of sympathetic young teachers, (b) he was able, through the school's parent committee on teacher evaluation as well as through social pressure, to get unsympathetic teachers to go elsewhere and to recruit compatible new ones. By the time the city and suburban school systems merged, Washington's support base was firm, broad and deep. Ironically, after central support was withdrawn, the campaign to close down the school became a rallying point for Washington supporters, giving them a cause for unity.

One comes to appreciate the sophistication of Washington's support-building facility by looking at its handling of incipient opposition from some of the established groups in the Fishtown area. Washington was viewed with suspicion by some organizations because it was staffed by outsiders, pursued suspect goals, and

was a potential competitor for scarce funds. Washington responded by sending representatives to these organizations, supporting their projects, and explaining the school's goals. The organizations ultimately supported Washington's fight for survival. A similarly enlightened technique was to send letters to those who had taken an interest in the school's struggle to stay open, thanking them for their support.

Responsive Education Program (8): The program has strong support from both the district and the principals. It is able to select teachers who agree with its goals. Parent support took an ideal, if rare, form: Marian Barber was originally sought out by a group of parents who wanted her program for their children. You can't do better than that. After that, of course, the program had to consolidate and expand that support. There is a good lesson here in the utilization of the powers of cooptation for positive ends. Responsive Education is based on training parents to take on significant roles in the program. All forms of active participation, whether engaging in activities at a resource center or carrying out formal duties as an employee, lead parents to identify personally with the program; its success reflects favorably on them. "Training" parents for their roles is also a process of indoctrination that reinforces this identification. Responsive Education goes much farther than most, however, in employing deliberate consciousness-raising strategies to develop parents as active political troops, when needed. This is an impressive

exploitation of the power of knowledge: by giving it to parents it develops its own power base.

East Town (9): Support for the school and for its collaborative structure was probably problematic and narrow from the start, though this did not become manifest for a while. As mentioned above, support from the central board was soft. It treated East Town like other schools when making budget, staffing or other decisions. While there was commitment on the part of the founding group and among parents in its pilot year, once the school's parent community expanded and changed, this commitment did not get transferred. As a support base this was one of sand.

6. Teachers, staff

Washington (6): Upon the arrival of Ned Winter, Washington began attracting many young, energetic teachers who shared Winter's commitment to humanistic education and parent involvement in policy making. The NSB soon had the power to select teachers, so eventually the staff was hand-picked. The most striking sign of the unusual level of teacher commitment to the community school is that a significant number of them routinely and voluntarily give up a part of their salaries to pay parents to participate.

Responsive Education Program (8): This is a program within a larger school. Its teachers have all volunteered and been selected to take part. They have also been amply trained in the principles and practices of the Responsive Education Program, which is based

on collaboration with parents. The program offers numerous opportunities for teachers and parents to meet and work together.

East Town (9): The original staff of East Town was hand-picked and committed to the school's philosophy. They were instrumental in translating some of the principles in the proposal into practice, for example, creating the committee structure, establishing student orientation methods, and setting up various workshops. They were mostly young and democratically-minded, and supported widespread community involvement. With the advent of expansion and new leadership, however, most of the original teachers left; the new ones, not having been socialized under the old regime and reflecting the new one, have no collective commitment to parent involvement.

7. Parent Participation: strategies, structures, roles.

Washington (6): Parent involvement is encouraged and opportunities provided in multiple forms, from simplest social participation such as attending chili suppers, bingo games, open houses, etc., to participation in school decision making and governance. The River City site researcher, in fact, devised a table of "Levels of Parent Participation" to show many of the options available to parents. (See figure 2 on following page; a table derived from this one appears on p. 26-27.) He also observed that the multiplicity of possible entry points at different levels of intensity allowed parents to participate at a level that was comfortable and compatible with present skills.

FIGURE 2

Levels of Parent Participation

LEVEL	EXAMPLES
1. Participation through avoidance	boycotts of school
2. Participation at home	1. Reading and reacting to general information sent home by school, and 2. to particular information about progress and problems of child 3. Discussing child's experience in school.
3. Social participation	Attending chili suppers, bingo games, PTA meetings, and open houses, crafts programs.
4. Fund-raising participation	Staffs chili suppers, bingo games, paper drives
5. In-school non-classroom service	Lunchroom worker, mini-bus driver, receptionist, library aide, clerical worker.
6. In-school, educational service	Classroom paraprofessional, tutoring.
7. Participation in school decision-making and governance	Mini-board member, teacher selection task force member, teacher evaluation task force member.

Responsive Education Program (8): Three interrelated strategies have been employed to develop, maintain and expand active parent involvement in the program: (1) creation of formal and informal roles, some paid, for parents: (2) specific skill-building structures and activities for parents, e.g., workshops, projects, parent rooms, committees; (3) consciousness-raising activities to develop parents as active, informed supporters. As at Washington (6), a variety of participation modes is made available to parents; even within designated roles, individual parents are able to determine their own forms of participation according to their preferences and their skills. The "flexibility with which parent facilitator roles have been envisaged" appears to have been a positive factor in developing school-related capacities of parents.

1. Parent Roles:

The "Open School": Responsive Education Program (8) schools are marked by the presence of significant numbers of parents in school every day. Their presence has been deliberately encouraged, first by removing many of the usual impediments to access to the school by parent visitors (need for appointment for permission, visitors' passes, etc.), then by providing positive incentives such as a parent room and a socially receptive atmosphere, finally by providing an array of participatory structures--committees, workshops, etc. (see list below). The attitude of receptiveness to parent visitors and the phenomenon of the ongoing parent

presence in school create a climate that is considered an extremely important aspect of parent involvement at Responsive Education Program schools by the site researcher. The "hanging out" of parents gives them a chance to meet each other and each other's children--a familiarity that is crucial to developing togetherness on issues.

Responsive Education Program (8) Support Committee: This informal committee is comprised of anyone (mostly parents and some teachers) who chooses to attend the twice-monthly meetings. It was suggested by Marian Barber as an explicitly supportive body, seeking to understand the progress and problems of the developing program in order to lend whatever assistance is possible. ("The teachers need your help.") This function is distinguished from a watchdog or monitoring function, which is left to the Education Committee of the Parents Association.

Bilingual Parent Facilitators: The program got funding for two of these, one in each school, to help expand involvement of Hispanic parents. Both share the program's philosophy, and have been developed (informal training) to be fully conversant with the program, and to serve as leaders and as spokespersons. As part of this development, a BPF Advisor listens to the BPF's observations on various program activities and helps put them in perspective. For instance, when a facilitator was critical of a teacher's performance, the advisor pointed out that this teacher was herself

developing her capacities and was already doing better than before; the BPF was then able to articulate this complexity and insight to other parents.

Other Roles and Structures: The plethora of organized groups for parent participation in various school affairs is significant for their sheer number. Although most of those listed below are school-wide rather than strictly Responsive Education groups, the presence of RE, which is now predominant at the schools, is considered to have had a decisive influence in their getting started. Furthermore, Responsive Education Program parents as a rule are the most active in most of these groups and activities:

- Black Parents Union - multi-ethnic membership; semi-formal group that monitors Black-oriented issues (such as curriculum reflecting Afro-American culture and history).
- Club de Padres - school-wide committee, regular meetings open to all; discusses school issues in Spanish.
- Class Mother's Representatives - one mother from each classroom, serve as liaison between Education Committee of Parents Association and individual classrooms; also meet as a group.
- Visitors Guides - teams of parents take parent visitors on tours of the school, including classrooms and office.
- Title I Committee - membership: eleven parents, three paraprofessionals, one teacher, the principal; monitors Title I.

--Abrahams Committee - parents preside over this committee which administers a private trust fund given to the school; parents decided to devote the money to upgrading music education.

--Representatives to District-Wide Bilingual Committee - two parents per school.

2. Skill building: Structures and activities that have been employed to develop specific strengths in parents include the following:

Workshops: to familiarize parents with curriculum materials in use in the Responsive Education Program.

Parent room: a room permanently assigned to parents, where workshops are held in such skills as printing, bookmaking, marbelizing.

Responsive Education Program (8) Documentation Project: in which parents were trained in interviewing, observation, recording and other skills. This project was created in part precisely to give parents training in useful skills for a worthwhile purpose (documenting the project) that would also have the effect of increasing parents' knowledge and understanding of the program.

Saturday Parent-Child Workshop: these gave parents a chance to learn and participate in learning activities their children take part in in the program--waterplay, clay, creative movement, etc.

Monthly Workshops for Paraprofessionals.

3. Consciousness-raising: These activities have three purposes: to present information to parents on certain topics such as learning disabilities, standardized testing, class size, evaluation, etc.; to present the Program's rationale for its own stand on the issue; and to suggest possible action parents might take. Although it should not be confused with democratic participation in decision making, this is a highly political activity. It is a strategy for building support among clients, developing them as political resources. Parents become advocates for positions on substantive issues that affect the Program in some way. For example, the case study, (Karunakaran, 1977) documents a case in which the Program set out to inform, or propagandize, parents as to its opposition to standardized testing of elementary school children, (on grounds that children's skills are not stabilized at that early age, and differential results lead to deficit labeling and treatment of some children):

It was suggested to parents that they maintain in their parent rooms of their respective schools literature on the issues of standardized testing... and other topics of interest to parents.

In addition, "veteran" parents from another school that had Responsive Education Program (8) were invited to come and explain how they monitor and document activities at their school. The usual forum for such sessions is a monthly meeting held by the program's Advisory Service at its headquarters, the Workshop Center for Responsive Education. Parents are invited to join the meetings of the Advisory once a month, with veteran parents usually

attending. If a matter of special importance is to be discussed, special efforts are made to bring in larger attendance.

East Town (9): An elaborate structure was devised here involving parents. Unfortunately, the structure admitted only a single mode of participation, which was serving on governing and policy committees. Attending meetings and taking part in them, however, requires a certain tolerance for committee procedures as well as skills in group discussion and decision making. Parents were, in effect, assumed to have these capacities, as no training or preparation for their roles as committee members was provided. When the school's population expanded and changed, it became commensurately harder to interest untrained parents in this type of participation. The school's leaders, unfortunately, were unwilling to reevaluate the original narrow system for involvement, an attitude epitomized in this remark, overheard by the site researcher:

"Don't condemn the structure, it's the people who don't work."

This condition makes other factors that also stymied meaningful participation (see next section) seem almost superfluous.

8. Critical factors, events, activities, problems

Washington (6): Eighteen critical activities were considered by the site researcher as "necessary but not sufficient for the development of parent participation." The first six, which concern the central office level activities, needed to be followed by favorable conditions at the school level. Likewise, activities at the school level probably needed central office support to achieve results.

Critical Activities

Central office level:

1. Superintendent Baldwin's (6) initiation of building-level decision making with parents included (Neighborhood School Boards).
2. River City (9) Board of Education's delegation of decision-making powers to Neighborhood School Boards.
3. Superintendent's provision of training (Human Relations Skill) and support to individual schools.
4. Failure of concept of parent decision making to be formalized in law.
5. Central Office requirement of evidence of parental involvement in decisions about particular programs prior to funding of those programs.
6. Superintendent's continuation of monitoring, support, and reinforcement of progress in the development of Neighborhood School Boards.

School level:

7. Principal's strong backing of parent participation and recruitment of parents to participate.
8. Principal's getting rid of teachers hostile to parental involvement in decision making.
9. Washington's (6) Neighborhood School becomes a legal corporation with parents' roles and rights included as part of Articles of Incorporation.
10. Slots available for participation at all levels and at different degrees of intensity. This availability allows entry participation at level comfortable to parent and compatible with present skills. Also provides on-the-job training (and observational learning) for participation at other levels.
11. Principal's carrying out of decisions made by the Board despite Central Office pressure.
 - a. Ned Winter (6) closed down the school for a one-day party after the Neighborhood School Board voted to do this, despite Central Office pressure to keep school open.

Principal says his action was critical because parents were testing his commitment.

- b. In newly merged system, the principal continues to delegate authority to Neighborhood School Board despite being told not to do so by Central Office personnel.
12. Parent, staff, and community cohesion increased by week-end workshops.
13. Faculty and staff praise and reward participation by parents. Instances of non-participation are pointed out, questioned, and verbally "punished."
14. Workshops are conducted for parent couples to work out family strains created or increased by intense participation by one of two parents in the family.
15. Principal's continuing to press for parental participation in decision making despite initial interest of only three parents and a very gradual increase in that number.
16. Staff (certified teachers) regularly contributing from their own salaries to pay parents and community people who do volunteer work in the school.
17. Proposal's being written (and funded) to provide parent work-release center.
18. Principal's initiation of search for external funding source to operate as private school so parent control could continue.
19. Many parents, ironically due to the fact they were on ADC or unemployed, had a large amount of free time to devote to school activity.
20. Parent role in recruitment and selection of new teachers with similar commitments ensured both compatible staff and parents' sense of control.
21. The school's protracted fight for survival, (recounted at length in the case study), produced great cohesiveness, sense of common cause.
22. Parents are treated by the school. and see themselves, as full-fledged clients of "Washington Community School" (6), as important as the ultimate clients, the students. (Clients, tht is, in the sense of being direct recipients of benefits-- as well as providers of resources--from the school.)

Responsive Education Program (8): In detailing the process by which this program developed parents' capacity for collaboration in school problem solving, the case study posits four areas of critical activities, or four "stages", plus the key preconditions that led to their success. The four stages are legitimation, role creation and sharing of skills, collaboration on issues, and self-definition.

Legitimation: Once the Project discovered how close the sponsoring parents' ideas were to its own, it set out to demonstrate the confluence of both groups' ideas on both education and parent involvement. This was accomplished initially by inviting the interested parents to observe the Project's ideas in practice at schools where Responsive Education Programs (8) were already operating. The early "veteran" parents found legitimation of themselves in the Project, both in their persons as actively involved and in their ideas on education.

Role Creation and Sharing of Skills: The Project developed specific roles and set up support structures for parent participation (see outlines above), all designed to ensure active involvement and therefore increased "self-capacity". The Responsive Education Program (8) Support Committee, for instance, is open to any parent with a child in the program; it holds regular meetings to discuss parents' questions, observations, or concerns with teachers or advisors, as needed. Parents are encouraged to visit freely to familiarize themselves with all phases of the Project.

Collaboration on Issues: By systematically informing parents, via "consciousness-raising" sessions, on issues that bear significantly on the program, the Project effectively developed a powerful support base among its constituents, one that could be called upon should collaborative action be needed. Other instances of collaboration on issues include the accompanying by parents of Project staff to a national meeting in Federal City on standardized testing, and the joint staff-parent effort to evaluate the program through documenting parent and child reactions to it.

Self-Definition: This category refers to ways in which the Project encourages and supports parents's efforts to define their own roles in relation to the Program. One example, as we have seen, is to allow considerable flexibility in the way certain parent roles may be construed; this allows them to define a role for themselves that conforms to their own degree of skill and commitment. A different kind of example has emerged with the current fiscal crisis that is plaguing New York City schools. The resulting budget cuts have caused heated confrontations between the Central Board and local districts. The Responsive Education (8) Project has given tacit support for parents' resistance efforts, as well as some specific suggestions, but it has not attempted to dictate or supervise their line of action. Instead it has deliberately left room for parents to determine their own strategies, then complimented them on their efforts.

East Town (9): The following factors all contributed significantly to East Town's failure to maintain the collaborative decision making structure that figured so centrally in the school's plans.

1. No pre-existing school community, the school being brand new, so no history of common identity or activity.
2. Apart from the small group of like-minded people who organized the school, no attempt was made to establish a community constituency; the school was designed and Central Board approval sought and granted before ever consulting with or seeking approval of the community to be served.
3. There was a sharp discrepancy between the planning group (politically conscious middle class Blacks, Hispanics and whites) and eventual receiving parent group (lower class, nonpolitical Blacks and Hispanics) that increased the distance between them already established by the lack of collaboration in planning.
4. Soon after the school was launched, there was a major change in both number and composition of the student/community body: students went from 150 in number to 450; most of the new students were poor and Hispanic with bilingual learning needs.
5. The Central Board was not committed to East Town's experimental status: it mandated the expansion and did not support the collaborative structure of governance.

6. The school's leadership, divided among three top administrative posts, changed suddenly and drastically at an early stage, disrupting already-established allegiances and modes of operation. the new leadership was dominated by an authoritarian director (principal) who clashed with other leaders and led to resignations of faculty.
7. There was widespread confusion over the entire governance structure, with even participants uncertain of their roles and functions. Members of the Executive Council, for example, were unable to tell what that body is or does.
8. The collaborative structure provided just one form of involvement by parents: participation in committee meetings, despite the unpreparedness of most parents for such activity as "attending meetings, discussing ideas, making decisions on abstract concepts (and unfamiliar subjects) like curriculum, budget, program", etc.
9. The meetings themselves were poorly conducted: aimless, unproductive, boring and numerous-a deterrent in themselves.
10. There was an inability, or unwillingness, to respond to the obvious discrepancy between the involvement structure and those expected to be involved. A modification of the former or training of the latter (or both) was needed.
11. Necessary communications channels did not function: translations for the numerous non-English-speaking parents were inadequate or nonexistent; notice of meetings was given selectively

(according to individuals' positions on issues, to stack meetings) or too late. While some complained that "things always get decided by a few", the few were charging, "we never get any help."

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